

**Faculty Board on Athletics
Meeting of November 20, 2020
9:00-10:30 am—via ZOOM**

Members Present: Patricia Bellia (Chair), Corey Angst, Alex Blachly, Jaimie Bleck, Ann Firth, Lauren Hanna, Erin Hoffmann Harding, Patrick Holmes, Tracy Kijewski-Correa, Randy Kozel, Mary Ann McDowell, Susan Ohmer, Richard Pierce, Aaron Striegel, Jack Swarbrick, Kevin Vaughan

Athletics Liaisons: Jody Sadler, Angie Torain

Guests: Heidi Uebelhor, Associate Athletics Director; Claire Leatherwood Slebonick, Assistant Athletics Director and Recorder

1. Opening Prayer

Professor Tricia Bellia called the meeting to order at 9:02 am. Professor Aaron Striegel offered the opening prayer.

2. Minutes of Meeting of October 30, 2020

The Board unanimously approved the Minutes of October 30, 2020.

3. Chair's Announcements

Subcommittee and Liaison Assignments. Professor Bellia circulated sport liaison and subcommittee assignments for the upcoming year.

Sports Schedule Approvals. Professor Bellia announced that she approved the men's soccer post-season schedule, which included the ACC tournament, explaining that the attendant class miss request required the rescheduling of several exams. Professor Bellia shared that the Deans were very cooperative and that several student-athletes took the exams while away from campus. Professor Bellia also approved the post-season schedule for women's soccer, but, due to an early loss, student-athletes did not miss any exams. Additionally, Professor Bellia approved travel for football over a reading day, noting that a report on the team's reading day travel will be forthcoming at a later meeting. Professor Bellia commented that the only winter sport schedules not yet finalized were those of fencing and indoor track & field.

Captaincy Approvals. Professor Bellia announced that she approved the captains for men's golf, volleyball, men's and women's cross country, and men's basketball.

4. Report of Student-Athlete Feedback on Fall Semester

Professor Bellia reported on feedback on the fall semester provided by student-athletes on the Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) and the Athletics Steering Committee (Steering Committee).

Professor Bellia shared the overwhelming feeling of gratitude from student-athletes for being back in the classroom in-person, for being able to participate in their sports, and for the social opportunities provided by Student Affairs. She proceeded to share additional feedback on athletics-specific issues, academic matters, and student welfare.

Professor Bellia discussed several additional points on athletics matters, which included the feeling that the medical protocols did a good job of keeping all parties safe, the challenges surrounding the length of the winter break, the difficulty in developing team chemistry because of severe restrictions and regulations around team interactions, and the incredibly challenging nature of the ACC's fourteen day quarantine for close contacts.

Professor Bellia shared academic-specific feedback, which included information on the difficulty of hybrid classes, that online classes contributed to a feeling of isolation, and that support from ASSA was critical. She also raised the student-athletes' concerns around the winter session negating the opportunity of a mental break.

Professor Bellia reported the student-athletes' feedback on welfare-related issues, explaining that the student-athletes were burned out, dealing with Zoom fatigue and struggling with access to mental health resources as the demand was high. She reiterated the difficulty student-athletes reported on forming connections with their teammates, especially for underclassmen, and for finding an outlet for stress release. Student-athletes enjoyed SAAC's efforts to facilitate connections and were highly appreciative of being allowed to attend other student-athletes' home contests. The student-athletes vocalized their desire for more of these opportunities to build community. Professor Bellia shared the student-athletes' gratitude for the various social justice initiatives supported by the Athletics Department. She ended by noting that there were some comments surrounding the desire for the return of training table.

Professor Corey Angst described the student-athletes' thankfulness for the Athletics Department listening to them and commented that their response shows the value of the Steering Committee: the student-athletes were able to voice concerns without feeling threatened, and those concerns led to real changes. Mr. Jack Swarbrick elaborated on the composition of the Steering Committee, explaining that there are also several coaches on it, and shared the overwhelming sense of gratitude from the student-athletes for everyone's efforts to enable them to return to campus this fall and participate in their sports. Professor Bellia commented that student-athletes exhibited great joy in being back on campus, reinforcing the worth of Notre Dame's collective efforts to allow students to return to campus.

Professor Tracy Kijewski-Correa asked if there was an opportunity to discuss reducing the ACC's quarantine period. Mr. Swarbrick replied that the ACC's Medical Advisory Group (MAG) is considering some modification to its current protocols.

5. Introduction of Niele Ivey, Karen & Kevin Keyes Family Head Coach, Women's Basketball

Professor Bellia introduced Ms. Niele Ivey, the Karen & Kevin Keyes Family Head Coach of Women's Basketball. Professor Bellia stated that Ms. Ivey graduated from Notre Dame in 2000 with a degree in History, won a national championship during her time as a member of the women's basketball team, played professionally in the WNBA for five years, and then returned to Notre Dame as a coach on former Head Coach Muffet McGraw's staff. Professor Bellia shared how, as a member of Coach McGraw's staff, Ms. Ivey was part of the 2018 national championship winning team and then left to coach in the NBA with the Memphis Grizzlies before returning to lead the women's basketball program upon Coach McGraw's retirement.

Ms. Ivey thanked Professor Bellia for the introduction. She shared how grateful she is to be back at Notre Dame as the Head Coach of the women's basketball program and for the support that Mr. Swarbrick has provided through the transition. Ms. Ivey described how she is living out her purpose in this role.

Ms. Ivey discussed some of the critical elements of the fall. She commented on the challenges her squad faced because of the impact of COVID-19, including a pause and the limited number of student-athletes available to participate due to contact-tracing protocols. She shared how thankful she, her staff, and student-athletes are to have a season and the ability to play. Ms. Ivey shared her excitement regarding the recruiting class she announced earlier this month and the emotions surrounding the building of her staff.

Ms. Ivey shared her coaching philosophy, which she described as a relationship-driven philosophy focused on the fundamentals of love, service, and mentorship. She explained that her goal is to help prepare young women for life, not just basketball.

Ms. Ivey commented on her excitement to be on the call and to meet the members of the Board.

Professor Ohmer thanked Ms. Ivey for joining the call and asked Ms. Ivey how being a History major affected her outlook. Ms. Ivey replied by describing how her undergraduate education is something she is leaned on particularly during the past year's civil unrest and social justice movements.

Professor Mary Ann McDowell asked Ms. Ivey to describe, other than the impact of COVID-19, her most significant challenges. Ms. Ivey discussed the relative inexperience of her team particularly in light of the strength of the conference.

Professor Kijewski-Correa inquired as to Ms. Ivey's approach to capitalizing upon her relationship with former Coach McGraw while simultaneously charting her own path. Ms. Ivey described how she believes she reflects Coach McGraw while also being herself, focusing on her passion for Notre Dame and for the game of basketball. Ms. Ivey discussed how she leans on

what she learned from Coach McGraw while going her own way. Ms. Ivey shared that she remains close with Coach McGraw but that Coach McGraw has not been overbearing, providing an advantage for Ms. Ivey.

Mr. Swarbrick asked Ms. Ivey to discuss what she learned from her year coaching in the NBA. Ms. Ivey commented on what she learned about new schemes and systems, player development, the building of a culture, the management of an organization, and the use of analytics. She also described how she gained a different perspective, particularly working with a different head coach and a different gender.

In response to a question from Mr. Pat Holmes, Ms. Ivey discussed the use of analytics, particularly in player scouting, offensive and defensive efficiencies, recruiting, and insights into line-ups.

Ms. Ivey replied to a question from Professor McDowell about the mental health of the team by sharing that one student-athlete took a leave of absence due to mental health concerns and that there are a lot of student-athletes dealing with mental health issues. Ms. Ivey discussed her belief in the importance of having good relationships with student-athletes to help facilitate understanding which resources student-athletes need.

In response to another question from Professor McDowell, Ms. Ivey commented on the difference in relationship with student-athletes between an assistant and head coach. She described some of those differences and how she is managing the transition.

Professor Richard Pierce commented on Ms. Ivey's time as a student in his class.

Professor Bellia asked Ms. Ivey to comment on the student-athletes' overall experience this year through the challenges of dealing with COVID-19. Ms. Ivey discussed how the team returned to practice in phases, wearing masks, advancing through the Athletics Department's playbook protocols, and the general excitement of her team to be able to play. She complimented on the students' willingness to follow the protocols and to do everything asked of them so they could play.

In response to a question from Mr. Holmes about the potential for transfers in future years, Ms. Ivey discussed the importance of appropriate roster management.

Ms. Ivey replied to a question from Professor Bellia about the recruiting dead period by discussing its various challenges, including the difficulty in conveying over Zoom calls the special feel of Notre Dame, particularly given general Zoom fatigue.

With no other questions, Professor Bellia thanked Ms. Ivey for her time and Ms. Ivey thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak with them.

6. Academic Reports, Pat Holmes, Director of Academic Services of Student-Athletes

Professor Bellia introduced Mr. Holmes and the various academic reports presented for the Board's discussion, thanking Mr. Holmes for the herculean effort to ready this information for the Board's meeting.

2020 NCAA Graduation Rate Report. Mr. Holmes began by defining the key measurements, the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) and the NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR). Mr. Holmes highlighted the primary points of comparison for the FGR when contrasted with the GSR, noting that the FGR tracks grant-in-aid (GIA) student-athletes who initially enroll in the institution as freshmen in a fall semester. The federal rate is the only metric that allows a direct comparison between student-athletes and all students, but it does not account for student-athletes who transfer into an institution or enroll in January. He described the key features of the GSR, stating that the NCAA initiated the measure in 2005 as a way to capture transfers and to chart academic performance ("good standing") while enrolled at an institution. Mr. Holmes also explained the definition of "good standing" and how to calculate the GSR.

Mr. Holmes shared a summary of the University's most recent FGR and GSR numbers, noting that they are very good and consistent with those from past years, which reflects his belief that Notre Dame's coaching staffs are mission-driven. He highlighted that Notre Dame student-athletes had a 98% GSR, which is the best GSR among FBS institutions for the 14th consecutive year. Notre Dame's FGR was 92%, which was second behind Stanford. Mr. Holmes shared rates by teams, noting that 19 of 22 teams had a GSR of 100%. He pointed out that Notre Dame's numbers were very consistent with peers.

In response to a question from Professor McDowell about how student-athletes are counted should they quit the team, Mr. Holmes responded that the outcome for that student is still included in Notre Dame's calculations. Professor McDowell asked for more context surrounding the FGR of soccer and rowing, to which Mr. Holmes explained that should a student-athlete transfer, as was the case for soccer and rowing, the institution's rate decreases. Professor Bellia noted that rowing is a very large team and that there were a number of pieces underlying these transfers. Mr. Holmes responded to a question from Professor Ohmer about men's basketball by sharing additional information about the background of the two student-athletes who transferred.

Mr. Holmes, in response to a question from Professor Bellia, indicated the Athletics Department traditionally puts together information on the FGR and GSR of different demographic groups within the student-athlete population.

Academic Progress Rate Report. Mr. Holmes discussed the Academic Progress Rate (APR), which he described as a real-time, year-by-year rate, calculated for each sport by giving each GIA student-athlete the possibility of earning an eligibility point (by maintaining academic eligibility) and a retention point (by staying enrolled in the institution) for each term. Mr. Holmes explained how the APR complements the GSR and provided context around a number of Notre Dame's teams' APRs.

In response to a question from Professor Striegel about the impact of potential changes to NCAA transfer rules, Mr. Swarbrick commented that he does not anticipate that there will be a new metric. He pointed out that the gap between GSR and FGR will likely grow more dramatic and briefly discussed the expected impact on those institutions outside the Autonomy 5 conferences. Mr. Holmes agreed with Mr. Swarbrick's assessment.

Grade Report. Mr. Holmes explained, in response to a question from Professor Ohmer, that OSPIR provides the best test score submitted by the student-athlete in the application process for use in the Grade Report.

Mr. Holmes discussed the GPA Summary for the student-athlete population, noting that the mean GPA for all student-athletes and, specifically, GIA student-athletes is at the highest point it has been over the last 10 years. Mr. Holmes shared his belief that high GPAs are an important statement about the Athletics Department's commitment to the university mission and evidence of delivering on promises made to prospective student-athletes during the recruiting process. Crucial to this success, Mr. Holmes added, is that the resources to support student-athletes' academic success are available and that student-athletes take advantage of those resources.

Professor Kijewski-Correa asked how Mr. Holmes' office will evaluate Spring 2020 GPAs against previous semesters, noting the challenges this poses for longitudinal tracking. Mr. Holmes stated that the Spring 2020 GPAs will not be comparable to any past semesters and that Spring 2020 was a challenging semester in many ways. Mr. Swarbrick shared the difficulty coaches are having with evaluating high school students' academic records given the educational challenges posed by COVID-19 and anticipated that these issues may continue to be reflected in following years' reports.

7. NCAA Infractions Matter

Professor Bellia announced that Notre Dame has a NCAA infractions matter that will become public knowledge before the Board meets next. She shared the basic facts of the underlying NCAA violation, which the NCAA characterized as a level II violation. The NCAA packaged the violation with two other more minor (level III) violations. She discussed the University's decision-making process around whether proceed to a hearing or to reach a negotiated resolution, and shared that the University chose to go through the negotiated resolution process. Mr. Swarbrick stated that it is important to note that the coach in question is no longer employed by the institution and that there was an extensive cost-benefit analysis around whether the University would challenge the underlying penalties. Challenging the penalties could have resulted in the Committee on Infractions imposing greater penalties on the University. Mr. Swarbrick shared his disagreement with attaching probation to the penalties levied against the University.

In response to a question from Ms. Hanna about the implications of probation, Mr. Swarbrick discussed that, independent of the fact that the Athletics Department is on probation, the department will redouble its educational efforts and auditing. He shared that probation increases the risk of greater consequences should there be any additional NCAA violations.

In response to a question from Professor Kijewski-Correa, Mr. Swarbrick commented on the NCAA's evaluation of the involvement of the prospective student-athlete in multiple NCAA violations. Ms. Heidi Uebelhor provided additional context surrounding the underlying violation.

8. Adjournment

Professor Bellia stated that, due to the meeting running over time, subcommittees would not meet and that chair elections would occur by email. [Members later agreed that Corey Angst will chair the Academic Integrity subcommittee and Susan Ohmer will chair the Student Welfare subcommittee.]

After wishing the Board a Happy Thanksgiving, Professor Bellia adjourned the meeting at 10:41 am.